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AUTHOR Dick, Robert C.
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ABSTRACT

Speech communication departments use a number of criteria when selecting a job candidate. In addition to good graduate training in the area advertised, the candidate should have a good record in research and publication or good prospects for such a record. Moving is inherent to healthy young academics and should be expected, but speech communication departments should be cognizant of why candidates move and make sure which moves are a more predictable part of their professional development. Some candidates move because they have outgrown their jobs; some accept a job at a less prestigious institution so that they might complete their Ph.D.'s before trying to move on; and some are ready to take on the more challenging work of graduate level instruction. Effective initial appointments and a coalescence of candidate training with position requirements will give more continuity with fewer job changes because of dissatisfaction. Yet, so long as institutions call for active research and publication as a significant tenure criterion, they will face the dilemma of selecting (1) active candidates who publish and who have upward mobility potential as well as a need to move in order to satisfy their ideal interests, or (2) less active candidates who publish and who will be allowed to stay only if they will do enough research and publish enough to satisfy tenure requirements. (HOD)

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TO WHAT EXTENT SHOULD AN "UPWARDLY MOBILE" CANDIDATE BE CONSIDERED OVER ONE WHO HAS GREATER PROMISE FOR REMAINING BUT LESS MARKETABILITY?

by
Robert C. Dick
Indiana University, Indianapolis

Central States Speech Association Convention
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As we administratively struggle through the 1980's, there appears to be a pervasive attitude that higher education, including speech communication, is a "seller's market," i.e., we have a surplus of Ph.D.'s, and all you must do is advertise a job and the "best" will seek it. And, indeed, some outstanding persons have been appointed to my faculty in recent years. Some have stayed, others have gone. Those who left were engaged in new programs at our school which needed further development and continuity; the faculty members were at the point of leaving, and rightfully furthering their careers, but many students in their specialized programs were in the middle of their studies. Such turnover, while bringing some advantages to those involved, can occasionally bring unfortunate incoherence to student major concentrations and departmental operations. Under the circumstances one sometimes wonders if he could have, or should have, selected someone who would stay in the position longer. While a certain amount of "mobility" is necessary in our profession, today I want to explore the issue: "To what extent should an 'upwardly mobile' candidate be considered over one who has greater promise for remaining but less 'marketability'?" I will broaden this a little to mean not just an "upwardly mobile" candidate but a generally more mobile candidate, whether upwardly, laterally, or otherwise. Yet, the thrust of my analysis will deal with upward mobility.

In the Fall, 1984, issue of Communication Quarterly, Elizabeth P. Lance, et al, published a relevant article entitled "Faculty Careers: A Status Report," in which they had sent a mail survey to 500 speech communication faculty teaching at four-year institutions. Those surveyed were randomly selected from a total usable population of 2,800 SCA members listed in the 1981 Directory. There was a 55%

return. Of the various career paths, they found one, which they called "The Road to Ithaca," which could be described as upwardly mobile. This path primarily included the person who obtained a job "in a college without a graduate program, moved to a recognized graduate institution, and then moved and stayed at a major research institution."[1] There are other mobility paths and several motivations for those who follow them. Yet, the one mentioned here is especially significant to me in that my Department has no graduate program, albeit an M.A. proposal in applied communication is pending.

What are the criteria used by us, and I presume many others, in selecting a job candidate? In addition to good graduate training in the area advertised, we emphasize a good record in research and publication or good prospects for such a record. After all, we are a growing university with hopes of a graduate program, and research and publication are integral factors. Such will enhance the reputation of the school and the department; perhaps more important, that knowledge and involvement should better the academic environment for students and professional colleagues alike.

The specialty areas in which we seek faculty members are relatively new ones such as organizational communication as contrasted with rhetoric and public address, or private media as contrasted with commercial telecommunications. Consequently, the supply in our advertised areas might not be as great as that overall; at least the number of ads in placement bulletins imply a somewhat greater demand for specialists in such areas as organizational communication than in more traditional or general ones. Those appointed by us have upward mobility both in terms of potential publication records and because they are in areas where jobs are more plentiful. So the

prospect of their soon being extended offers from other institutions which have graduate programs, lighter teaching loads, more conducive intellectual environments overall, or for whatever other reason, becomes a major consideration for us.

As a start in exploring ways of securing and maintaining the most appropriate personnel, the publication factor must be considered. While we advertise for active publishers and tend to shy away from those with minimal publication lists, we could be performing an injustice to ourselves and the appointee by <u>emphasizing</u> this. The Lance study noted that:

> The active publishers profile a group who spend their careers working in departments with large graduate programs. These faculty choose their jobs on the basis of departmental reputation and the research potential in their departments.[2]

Oddly enough, the so-called "active publishers" greatly base their personal satisfaction on the research and publication process, and reportedly not so much on such factors as "salary, happiness with academic life, program emphasis or advancement opportunities."[3] Thus, without a graduate program and a reputation often concomitant with one, is it realistic for us to expect an "active" publisher to stay around? Possibly not. To compound the problem, our large undergraduate programs require much teaching, advising, and the types of duties sometimes not stressed or mastered by "active publishers." The Lance study proceeds to report that "these prospective" active publishers' may encounter tasks to be done where they are hired for which they are ill-prepared, such as teaching, student advising and contact, program development and community work. They may even do damage to these academic settings by continuing to push writing and

publishing as the academic norm."[4]

Indeed, our department has often sought the renaissance person who shows great promise as an active publisher but who also can teach a substantial undergraduate load and do a notable share of advising, curricular development, and the like. Under such circumstances, we realize that those who want to publish extensively will find no long-term fulfillment in our academic bailiwick. Yet, they might seek appointment by us in hopes of our changing or with the confidence that they can move to a level better fitting them if we cannot and/or do not change.

Of course mobility is inherent to the college professor. We usually get accustomed to moving around just in going to graduate school, and think it a common phenomenon to keep moving, if conditions permit, until we arrive at that "dreamed-of" position. One of the most thorough studies on this subject was done in the mid-sixties and has application to some of the mobility issues faced by my Department today. In his book, Academic Labor Markets, David G. Brown reported on responses of some 7,500 four-year college teachers from all disciplines, all regions, at all ranks, and from different sized institutions having a wide range of prestige and quality. Brown reported that when persons reach the associate or full professor stage of their careers, they typically have changed institutions about three times.[5] In fact, "a significant number of professors apparently start looking for their next jobs before they have actually started to serve on a newly accepted one. Few consider their present jobs permanent."[6] Other studies have confirmed that most of these career shifts are made "in the first ten years of professional experience,"--

in fact, about 64% are made in that time.[7]

Admittedly, moving is inherent to healthy young academics and should be expected. But we should be cognizant of <u>why</u> they move and make sure which moves are a more predictable part of their professional development; thus, we can more readily anticipate them and cushion the effects on our programs.

What are the reasons for academic mobility? Brown advanced several. The first group were those who were "actively dissatisfied," those who had outgrown their jobs. This included the aforementioned "active publishers" who had "located in institutions which emphasize teaching." Also included were those "who once accepted a job at a [less prestigious] institution so that they might complete their Ph.D.'s before trying to move on. And, finally, the actively dissatisfied included persons who have "served their apprenticeships in undergraduate teaching and are now ready to take on what they envision to be the more challenging work of graduate level instruction."[8]

If my Department is to appoint faculty who have greater prospects for remaining, perhaps we can do so by avoiding those who place active publishing above the teaching and the service duties necessary to our urban environment. A major gauge could be whether or not the candidate's graduate school emphasizes research primarily. If it does, perhaps the candidate rapidly would become dissatisfied with his or her appointment with us. The Lance study noted that:

> The Choice of what graduate school was attended influenced significantly what career was to be had. Those who chose other than major research institutions limited their opportunities to teach in major research institutions and also ran the risk of learning academic values that would not be rewarded under the current publish or perish academic model.[9]

So, while such graduate schools might limit the breadth of the candidate's career choices, and correspondingly the amount of his or her mobility, it actually might make the person better fitted to the demands of a position in my Department.

Theoretically, this does not mean that the appointee would not conduct any research, but research would be an adjunct to the other functions emphasized in his/her graduate preparation. With an emphasis on non-research, the question now concerns whether or not the appointee should or would engage in research and publication at all. With current tenure standards, the non-publisher might well be forced into mobility anyway. The non-publishers in speech communication far outweigh publishers. "In only one age group (41-45 years) does the number of faculty who have published exceed 50 percent." Nearly four of every five faculty in Lance's sample publish "less than one article per year. One third of the sample have never published an article or book; over 41 percent of the sample have had less than two publications during their careers."[10]

Such statistics make our choice difficult. "Upwardly mobile" professors, as traditionally defined, cannot readily find long-range satisfaction in an institution with no graduate school and with an emphasis on undergraduate teaching; yet they provide some of the intellectual stimulation we all need. The non-publisher might have much of the right training, but little research motivation, and probably little chance to achieve tenure at our institution, which uses publication as a more and more essential criterion.

Still another variable with many unknowns is called "faculty provinciality." In contrast with the general mobility phenomenon among professors, is the tendency for some persons to study at an

institution or one nearby, take root in that area, and not want to leave unless absolutely necessary. Indeed, this gives professional continuity to a program, but there becomes the question of how much inbreeding is desirable in lieu of new perspectives and intellectual approaches. B.J. Ciampa published a 1977 study on "Comparative Faculty Provinciality," in which he observed the high number of faculty members who have been granted one or more degrees by the institution at which they are now employed. He also recorded that a large proportion of the remaining faculty degrees were awarded from other institutions within the same state or from those located in bordering states. Ciampa made an assessment model and concluded what we all have been taught about the inbreeding problem; he then admonished that "comparative institutional provinciality studies should be considered when faculty recruitment, faculty effectiveness, and curricular changes are made on a departmental, divisional, or institution-wide basis."[11]

Of the few conclusions to be drawn today, we can say that some faculty mobility is necessary, but effective initial appointments and a coalescence of candidate training with position requirements will give more continuity with fewer job changes because of dissatisfaction. Yet, so long as our institution calls for active research and publication as a significant tenure criterion, we face the dilemma of selecting (1) an active publisher who has upward mobility potential as well as a need to move in order to satisfy his/her ideal interests, or (2) a less active publisher who will be allowed to stay only if he/she will research and publish enough to satisfy tenure requirements. The former is the better appointee for

our hoped-for graduate program, but the latter can meet the ongoing needs for our undergraduate educational emphasis. Can the latter achieve tenure? Perhaps the answer lies in altering the traditional, formal publication expectatons in appointing and evaluating professors in speech communication. "Some 90 percent [in our discipline] are engaged in [non-publishing] tasks. They have different views of what satisfying, productive speech communication faculty careers include. Because they are contributing speech communication department members, it would make more sense to encourage them by finding ways of rewarding them for what they do well and/or basing contracts on the kinds of tasks that departments need to have performed."[12]

NOTES

1. Elizabeth P. Lance, et al, "Speech Communication Faculty Careers: A Status Report," Communication Quarterly, Fall 1984, p. 271.
2. Ibid., p. 272
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid., p. 275
5. David G. Brown, "Academic Labor Markets," ERIC, ED 016135, September, 1965, p. 36.
6. Ibid.
7. VenKatraman Anantaraman; Mobility of Professional Economists in the United States, (Madison, WI: Industral Relations Research Center, U. of Wisconsin, 1961), p. 29.
8. Brown, p. 39.
9. Lance, et al, p. 276.
10. Ibid., p. 272
11. Bartholomew J. Ciampa, "Comparative Faculty Provinciality: An Assessment Model," ERIC ED 136698, 1977, p. 1.
12. Lance, et al, p. 274.